

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently amended) A walk-behind lawn mower comprising:

an engine for driving at least one cutting blade;

a sulky attached to the mower, wherein the sulky comprises a substantially vertical pivot axis structure which is aligned substantially vertical relative to the ground during normal sulky operation when the sulky trails behind the mower, wherein a foot platform of the sulky pivots relative to a front arm of the sulky about a pivot axis defined by the substantially vertical pivot axis structure;

a latch assembly for receiving a protruding part of a sulky attached to the mower, the protruding part protruding from the substantially vertical pivot axis structure of the sulky, wherein the latch assembly includes a pivotal spring-biased latch having a recess defined therein, wherein the recess of the latch is adapted to receive the protruding part of the sulky when the sulky is folded up from a deployed position to a stowed position so that the latch assembly of the mower can hold the folded up sulky in the stowed position; [[and]]

a buttress plate located laterally forward of the latch, so that a leading portion of the substantially vertical pivot axis structure of the sulky is adapted to hit the buttress plate when the sulky is moved into the stowed position with excessive force; and

a release member operatively coupled to the latch assembly, wherein the release member extends upwardly from the latch assembly through a dashboard of the mower so that when an operator actuates the release member the latch assembly releases the sulky from the stowed position so that the sulky drops to the ground.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently amended) The mower of claim [[2]] 1, wherein the release member comprises an elongated rod including a curved top end, and when an operator pulls the rod upwardly this causes the latch assembly to release the sulky from the stowed position so that the sulky drops to the ground.

4. (Currently amended) A walk-behind lawn mower comprising:

an engine for driving at least one cutting blade;

a latch assembly for receiving part of a sulky attached to the mower, wherein the latch assembly includes a pivotal spring-biased latch having a recess defined therein, wherein the recess of the latch is adapted to receive a protruding member of a sulky when a sulky is folded up from a deployed position to a stowed position so that the latch assembly of the mower can hold the folded up sulky in the stowed position; [[and]]

wherein the protruding member extends outwardly from a normally vertical pivot axis of the sulky so as to define an angle θ of from about 30 to 70 degrees with the vertical pivot axis of the sulky; and

a release member operatively coupled to the latch assembly, wherein the release member extends upwardly from the latch assembly through a dashboard of the mower so that when an operator actuates the release member the latch assembly releases the sulky from the stowed position so that the sulky drops to the ground.

5. (Original) The mower of claim 1, wherein the latch assembly is located under a dashboard of the mower.

6. (Previously presented) The mower of claim 4, further comprising a buttress plate located laterally forward of the latch, so that a leading portion of the sulky is adapted to hit the buttress plate when the sulky is moved into the stowed position with excessive force.

7-17. (Canceled)

18. (Previously presented) The mower of claim 4, wherein the protruding member extends outwardly from the normally vertical pivot axis of the sulky so as to define an angle θ of from about 40 to 65 degrees with the vertical pivot axis of the sulky.

19. (Previously presented) The mower of claim 1, wherein the protruding member extends outwardly from the substantially vertical pivot axis structure of the sulky so as to define an angle θ of from about 20 to 75 degrees with a vertical pivot axis of the sulky.

20. (Previously presented) The mower of claim 19, wherein the protruding member extends outwardly from the substantially vertical pivot axis structure of the sulky so as to define an angle θ of from about 30 to 70 degrees with the vertical pivot axis of the sulky.

21. (Previously presented) The mower of claim 19, wherein the protruding member extends outwardly from the substantially vertical pivot axis structure of the sulky so as to define an angle θ of from about 40 to 65 degrees with the vertical pivot axis of the sulky.

22. (Previously presented) The mower of claim 1, wherein the protruding member is located in an approximately laterally central portion of the sulky during normal mower operation when the sulky is in the deployed position.

23. (Previously presented) The mower of claim 4, wherein the protruding member is located in an approximately laterally central portion of the sulky during normal mower operation when the sulky is in the deployed position.

24-26. (Canceled)

27. (New) A walk-behind lawn mower comprising:

an engine for driving at least one cutting blade;

a sulky attached to the mower, wherein the sulky comprises a substantially vertical pivot axis structure which is aligned substantially vertical relative to the ground during normal sulky operation when the sulky trails behind the mower, wherein a foot platform of the sulky pivots relative to a front arm of the sulky about a pivot axis defined by the substantially vertical pivot axis structure;

a latch assembly for coupling a protruding member of the sulky to a spring-biased latch

of the latch assembly when the sulky is folded up from a deployed position to a stowed position so that the latch assembly of the mower can hold the folded-up sulky in the stowed position;

wherein the protruding member extends outwardly from a body of the sulky so that at least a distal end of the protruding member defines an angle θ of from about 30 to 70 degrees with the vertical pivot axis of the sulky; and

wherein the protruding member of the sulky is directly coupled to the spring-biased latch when the sulky is folded up in a stowed position, but the protruding member of the sulky is not directly coupled to the spring-biased latch when the sulky is in a deployed position during normal sulky operation when the sulky is trailing behind the mower.

28. (New) The mower of claim 27, wherein the latch assembly is located under a dashboard of the mower.

29. (New) The mower of claim 27, further comprising a buttress plate located laterally forward of the latch, so that a leading portion of the sulky is adapted to hit the buttress plate when the sulky is moved into the stowed position with excessive force.

30. (New) The mower of claim 27, wherein the protruding member of the sulky extends outwardly from the vertical pivot axis of the sulky.